

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 CU-02 EUR-08 CIAE-00 IO-06
H-01 INR-05 L-01 SP-02 EB-04 /051 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:WNHOWELL:LF
APPROVED BY NEA/ARN:MDRAPER
-----030146Z 040862 /63

R 022357Z APR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: SCUL, SEDU, LE

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR HELP TO JEWISH SCHOOL

REF: BEIRUT 1411

1. WE WILL OF COURSE MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY OF MOGHRABE APPROACH, ACCORDING HIS WISHES. FOR EMBASSY BACKGROUND, BEIRUT MAINTAINED UNPUBLICIZED CONTACT FOR NUMBER OF YEARS UNTIL LATE 1976 WITH LAY LEADER OF BEIRUT JEWISH COMMUNITY, DR. JOSEPH ATTIYEH. CONTACTS, WHICH WERE HANDLED BY CAROLAN AND, LATER, HOWELL, TOOK PLACE AT DR. ATTIYEH'S HOSPITAL CUM SCHOOL LOCATED ACROSS FROM HOLIDAY INN AND DIRECTLY BEHIND CORNER POLICE STATION (ABOVE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOP) ON RUE JOHN KENNEDY. PREMISES WERE BADLY DAMAGED IN HOTEL DISTRICT FIGHTING AND WE LAST UNDERSTOOD THAT DR. ATTIYEH, WHO WAS QUITE ELDERLY, HAD RELOCATED IN EUROPE. IN VISITING HIM, EMBOFFS TOOK EMBASSY VEHICLE

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TO HOLIDAY INN AND, SUBSEQUENTLY, WALKED TO HIS RESIDENCE TO PRESERVE CONFIDENTIALITY. WITH IMPROVED SITUATION IN BEIRUT, EMBASSY MIGHT WISH DISCREETLY INVESTIGATE WHETHER ATTIYEH HAS RETURNED AND SEEK REESTABLISH WHAT WAS A HIGHLY USEFUL RELATIONSHIP.

2. YOU WERE QUITE CORRECT IN ASSURING MOGHRABE THAT NO

USG FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR REPAIR HIS SCHOOL. WE SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT HE MIGHT ALSO APPROACH UN, PARTICULARLY UNICEF, FOR POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE. IT IS, OF COURSE, HIS DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO SEEK SUPPORT OF AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS BUT IT OCCURS TO US THAT, GIVEN TRADITIONAL FRENCH TIES OF INSTITUTION, FRENCH OR OTHER WORLD JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS MIGHT BE OTHER POTENTIAL SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE THAT COULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO MOGHRABE.

FINALLY, WE WERE ALWAYS ASSURED BY DR. ATTIYEH THAT BEIRUT JEWISH COMMUNITY ENJOYED EASY ACCESS TO AND SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING FROM GOL. WE WONDER WHETHER MOGHRABE HAS SOUGHT ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE OF COMMUNITY'S FRIENDS IN POLITICAL STRUCTURE. OUTRIGHT GRANTS FOR REPAIR FROM GOL PROBABLY OUT OF THE QUESTION, BUT IT APPEARS POSSIBLE THAT LOW-INTEREST LOAN MIGHT BE OBTAINED.

3. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S GENERAL APPRECIATION OF SITUATION OF LEBANESE JEWISH COMMUNITY, INCLUDING APPROXIMATE SIZE. WE UNDERSTOOD FROM DR. ATTIYEH THAT MANY WEALTHIER MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY HAD BEGUN LEAVE LEBANON EVEN BEFORE CONFLICT REACHED ITS ZENITH AND SUSPECT THAT ADDITIONAL PERSONS FLED SUBSEQUENTLY. WE HAVE NOT BEEN PRESSED THUS FAR BY INTERESTED CONGRESSMEN AND OTHERS FOR INFORMATION ON LEBANESE COMMUNITY, BUT WE WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING FOR OUR OWN INFORMATION WHATEVER DATA AND/OR IMPRESSIONS EMBASSY CAN PROVIDE. MOREOVER, IF MOGHRABE AND OTHERS CAST THEIR NET ABROAD IN SEARCH FOR RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE, WE WOULD EXPECT THEIR EFFORTS WOULD SOONER OR LATER COME TO ATTENTION OF AMERICAN JEWISH

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COMMUNITY AND WOULD WANT TO BE IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE SOME EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY'S STATUS, IF ASKED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: JEWS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, SCHOOLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE073777
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WNHOWELL:LF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770115-0927
Format: TEL
From: STATE
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Image Path:
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Line Count: 100
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cd5101ab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 77 BEIRUT 1411
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2915528
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REQUEST FOR HELP TO JEWISH SCHOOL
TAGS: SCUL, SEDU, LE, (ATTIYEH, JOSEPH)
To: BEIRUT
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cd5101ab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009